onwards, a 'banking cash transaction tax' @ 0.1% is being levied in respect of cash withdrawals from banks above a special amount, other than from savings accounts. The tax is also levied on encashment of bank deposits above a specified amount. Further, it has become obligatory for all banks to report to the Income Tax Department all deposits which are exempt from Tax Deduction at Source (TDS) on interest.

(e) Not applicable, in view of reply to part (c) and (d) above.

Strike in Banks

1398. SHRI P. K. MAHESHWARI:
SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the employees of banks observed one day strike on 29th September, 2005;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether a proper notice to go on strike was given by the Unions;

(d) if so, the action taken to avert the strike, and if the strike was illegal, the action taken against the striking employees; and

(e) the loss suffered by banks due to strike?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S. S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A call for strike given by some of the employees 'unions and officers' associations of the Public Sector Banks (PSBs), a majority of the employees were on strike on 29th September, 2005. The unions/associations had given a call for strike on various issues relating to the banks besides the common demands of National Trade Unions Convention.

(c) and (d) Indian Banks' Association has reported that notice as required under the Industrial Disputes Act was given by the Unions. Conciliation Officer had not closed the proceedings for conciliations when the employees struck work on 29.09.2005. In terms of the extant instructions, the principle of "No work-No Pay" is followed by the bank managements for the striking employees.

(e) The loss, if any, to the banks on account of such strike cannot be quantified.

Impact of price hike on Wholesale Price Index

†1399. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn towards the statement of the member of Planning Commission and Chairman of Committee on Review of Wholesale Price Index, that with the increase in prices of petroleum products in the first week of September, 2005, there will be increase in inflation on the basis of 1.5 per cent Wholesale Price Index;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the effect of the above price hike on the Wholesale Price Index on the basis of the estimation made by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S. S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) to (c) According to the information available, the Member, Planning Commission had felt that the increase in the prices of mineral oils in the WPI basket between July, 2004 to September, 2005 would have an impact on the wholesale price index. This impact would be partly determined by the weight of mineral oils in the WPI basket. The WPI (Base 1993-94 =100) was 186.0 on week ending July 3, 2004 and 188.9 on week ending October 1,2005 which represents an increase of 1.56 per cent.

Merger of banks

1400. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any direction/proposal to be followed for merger of banks;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.